



# Bruce Peninsula Hospice Newsletter

January, 2004

## MY EXPERIENCE WITH BRUCE PENINSULA HOSPICE

I always wondered just what Hospice was and what it could do for a family. I found out when someone suggested that I call the Hospice Association when my husband, Bob, was terminally ill. I made that call and 2 ladies set up an appointment with me to talk about our family situation, Bob's illness and what they might be able to do for us.

After this very comfortable meeting in our home, it was decided that a volunteer would come to stay with Bob while I took a computer course in Owen Sound. These volunteers would also be available to talk with our teen-aged daughter about how she felt as her father was dying, and to endeavour to meet her needs as well.

I received a phone call saying 'J' would be coming on each of my course days. She arrived in a cloud of white snow and proceeded to introduce herself to us. We were very comfortable with her, and as I left, 'J' and Bob were talking like they were old friends. 'J' came several times and even brought a small ceramic dog to put on Bob's table, cheering us all up.

When friends called in to visit, she was in the background to provide help as needed. I came home to a clean kitchen on more than one occasion. 'J' was wonderful to our family. She kept a journal of what took place each time she was here and kept me up to date with the happenings in our home that I would miss by being away.

The last day Bob was home, several friends from church came to visit and sing for him. 'J' wrote their names down and chatted with them when one of their group was visiting with Bob. She was very thorough, and became a friend of our family.

About 6 weeks after Bob died, 'J' drove in and presented me with a birthday gift - socks that she had knit herself. I asked her how she knew it was my birthday and she said "A little bird told me." In tears, I realized the extent of this woman's caring for our family. She went far beyond the call of duty to provide those extra things to make a person feel special.

'J' has since invited me to attend a Hospice musical evening. We still keep in contact with each other. She is as welcome in my home as she has made me feel in her home. Thank-you 'J'.

With great memories,

— Ruth Sheasby

## BOOKS AT THE WIARTON LIBRARY

There is a collection of Hospice/Palliative Care books available at the Wiarton Public Library for your use with a valid Bruce County library card. But these books are not catalogued as part of the BC library system. **They must be handled in a special way.**

For example if you live in Tobermory and would like to borrow Austin Kutscher's book "Death and Bereavement," you could ask your local librarian to have it sent to Tobermory in a special delivery envelope.

When you are finished with it, it would have to be returned the same way, otherwise it may get lost in the system and not find its way back to our hospice collection in Wiarton. In order to borrow any of the collection of 20 books (at present, plus duplicates of some), all you need is your library card for a Bruce County branch. If you have questions you may contact the Wiarton Public Library at 534-2602.

## A GIRL TO CHERISH

Recently, whilst sitting at the bedside of a Resident in the Nursing Home, her room-mate Sarah was wheeled into the room in her wheelchair by Sarah's husband, Bob. I was already feeling a little sad and vulnerable as I had been offering condolences to the now sleeping Mary whose husband had just died.

Bob had spent his usual hour with Sarah, helping her with her supper. To see him with her was to see love in action. When he looked at her it was with adoration and with acute memories of a lifetime of experiences and mutual support together. Although she was unable to answer, he lovingly chatted about the things in life which had always interested her, and about family and times which they had shared. Now she was tired and falling asleep. Bob put on a cassette tape and to the sounds of 'Love is a many splendoured thing', stroked her brow, kissed her cheeks and murmured love words to her closed eyes and relaxed face.

The room was quiet and the lights low, and whilst the song evoked romantic memories for me personally, it was the suffusing of gentleness and cherishing which caused my eyes to well up with tears. They were sacred moments, and whilst I wanted to be invisible, I also felt blessed in witnessing their love.

When Bob eventually departed, I drank in the extraordinary aura of peace prevalent in that ordinary room. Permeating it, was the meaning and healing of life, and I understood how much more depth there is when love develops into cherishing. Many are liked, many are loved — but few are cherished into eternity.

*A true story with names changed.  
Submitted by Patricia Horner, Lion's Head*



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## HOSPICE DECEMBER 2003 POT LUCK

On December 10th about 35 of us gathered at the United Church in Lion's Head for our annual Pot Luck. Audrey Brown was on hand to give the blessing before we partook of a great array of delicious food and enjoyed each other's company. Thank you to Pat Horner for telling the classic story of "Little Albert" and his experiences with the Lion, and to Audrey who shared with us the many Christmas traditions throughout the ages and in different cultures. To end a very pleasant evening, Mary Busey played the piano while we sang Christmas carols.

## BEREAVEMENT WALKS

The bereavement walk held the five Fridays mornings in October 2003 in Lion's Head was a great success. There were 11 participants and five hospice volunteers involved over the 5 weeks. This informal group began with a casual walk about town and concluded with refreshments and sharing at the Central United Church Hall.

The atmosphere was very friendly and welcoming. Participants came when they were able — some attended all of the sessions while others attended only one or two. All enjoyed the companionship of others who shared some of the same feelings and experiences in the loss of a loved one. Good conversations ensued.

We are planning to run another 5 week session in the Spring of 2004. Dates have not been finalized but they are expected to run during April &/or part of May so please watch the papers and bulletin boards for an announcement. Anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one or even other kinds of loss is most welcome to join the group.

## VOLUNTEER STATISTICS SHEETS

It is imperative (i.e., **very important**) that we send our stats. sheets in one or two days after the end of each month. Bev Ker organizes these statistics which she is expected to have in to the Grey Bruce office by mid month. They are then forwarded to the government.

**Our government grants are based on these statistics.** If they are sent in late to our Wiarton office, they will be entered in our own files by Bev but will miss being included in the files the government receives, which creates a false picture of the work of our volunteers which in turn affects the grant money our organization needs for its success.

Let's all resolve to get our information in to the Wiarton office immediately after month's end. If mailing is a problem, call the information in to the office then mail your sheet at your earliest convenience with a note that the info was phoned in earlier.

Stat sheets may also be mailed by dropping off at the Lion's Head Hospital office. Either way just address it to the Bruce Peninsula Hospice, c/o Wiarton Hospital, 369 Mary Street, Wiarton, N0H 2T0.

## OUR CONDOLENCES

We extend our condolences to Mary and Bert Kowaltschuk who recently lost Mary's father and mother. Our thoughts are with them.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

Volunteers, please mark your calendars for a session dealing with the rituals around death to be held at the Lion's Head Church on May 1. Watch your mailbox for more information.

## ON TVO FEBRUARY 11: DYING AT GRACE

Watch this TVO Documentary's North American Television Premiere on **The View From Here**.

— **Wednesday, February 11 at 9 PM**  
— **Sunday, February 15 at midnight**

For this film, award-winning Canadian documentary director, Allan King was motivated by the desire to manage the fear of death more effectively. He tells the stories of the last days of five people.



Carmela is an elderly, religious Italian-Canadian with a daughter and grandchildren; she shares a room with Joyce, who is reluctant to take painkillers because she is afraid she will die in her sleep. Eda's cancer has gone into remission, granting her a renewed sense of hope and inspiring her to seek a new apartment outside the hospital. Rick, a former Satan's Choice biker who resists the discipline of the hospital, says he would rather die in a shootout than a hospital bed. Lloyd suffers from brain cancer and is supported by the constant presence of his parents and Norm, his partner of thirty years.

## ACCREDITATION

**What is accreditation?** It is a process which certifies that our Hospice has met all formal requirements of excellence in carrying out the Standards of Practice given to us by HAO (Hospice Association of Ontario).

**Why do we need Standards of Practice?** They ensure that there is consistent use of practices of providing Hospice care to meet expectations of clients, community and funders.

**What are the Standards?** They fall under five categories called *Quality Dimensions* as follows:

1. Accessibility
2. Client perspective
3. Safety
4. Competence
5. Continuity

**How will the Standards be measured?** Our Hospice will have a measurement tool which will be used as a guide to monitor how well our Hospice has addressed the Quality Dimensions, and met the Standards of Practice.

**What is the time frame?** HAO is estimating that the accreditation process will take about 4 years to complete. HAO is now in the process of finding funding which will cover the costs of this large and complex project.

**How do we get started?** The first phase which is projected for January to April of 2004 will involve the development of:

- **Satisfaction Surveys:** province-wide, consistent client/caregiver and volunteer satisfaction surveys
- **An Assessment Tool:** both in hard copy and in an electronic format for computer use
- **Standardized Forms:** province-wide, consistent data collection forms, client record forms

**How will BP Hospice carry out this process?** A special committee of volunteers, working closely with HAO, will be responsible for collecting the data from our records, and determining if the Standards are being met. You will be kept informed by your PCCC committee of when and how we will proceed.

— Sheila McLaughlin

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### 14th Annual Hospice Association of Ontario September 11-13/03

Several Bruce Peninsula hospice volunteers (Donna Baker, Eleanor Davis, Betty Idle, Bill McKenzie, Sheila McLaughlin, Kathy Peacock) attended the conference entitled "Vision, Voice, Action - Engaging the Future" in Alliston. There were three keynote speakers.

**Dr. David Kuhl**, author of the best selling book "What Dying People Want, Practical Wisdom for the End of Life", believes that we must first reflect on our own lives, remembering how we received and reacted to sad news, to grief, to compassion, to pain, etc.; we must look at 'Who am I?' in order to help those in our care.

Those who work with the dying, must suspend judgment. He stressed the importance of touch - it is 'medicine's real secret'. In terminal illness, patients may look back to the past searching for direction for their future. He says that terminal patients want truth. When good, bad & ugly come into our thoughts, they bring new wholeness - there may be scar tissue but they enable people to move from despair to integrity.

**Joy Ufema** is known internationally for her commitment to hospice palliative care and as a specialist in Thanatology. She recounted many of the experiences of her practice.

**Ann Mortifee** is known the world over for her passionate and honest music which extends beyond the performing arts into environment, women's issues, and emotional and societal issues. She received the Order of Canada for her outstanding commitment to the performing and healing arts and her significant contributions to hospice palliative care.

Ann's thoughts: Most were brought to this conference through a sorrow in their lives. It is an extraordinary experience to have a human life. Death is a passing through into another dimension. Ann uses music to energize the body. All deaths are preparations for letting go - letting the dream of life go. The energetic body starts to move away from the physical body. There are 7 major energy system chokras. The denser energy of the body connects with the energy of the soul through chokras. The body feels abandoned when we go out of it. The soul is not afraid of death - it is the body which is afraid of death. The spirit knows when it is time to die.

Give self time to grieve, be happy, be angry, feel wonder. We override our bodies - love them & listen to them. The healing journey works toward perfection. Know yourself, be true to yourself. Once you know your body you can go along with it and satisfy it. Be of service to your own body first in order to be able to be of service to others.

#### Following are reports on some of the sessions:

**Dr. Mary Vachon**, Psychotherapist in private practice and Association Professor at UofT, discussed the psychosocial spiritual issues for the patient and caregiver in palliative care. She explained that it is only through an awareness of one's own psychospiritual depths that the caregiver is able to enter into a collaborative healing relationship with dying persons.

Dr. Vachon discussed issues related to personal awareness in caregivers and the psychosocial spiritual needs and processes of the dying person. The spiritual needs in the dying person are multidimensional. The dying process is a psychospiritual journey.

**Dr. Larry Librach**, Director, The Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care spoke on Pain & Symptom Management. He explained that pain management is a key ingredient to excellence in hospice palliative care. Pain is a complex biopsychosocial and spiritual process. Pain

control in terminal illnesses still remains elusive for many patients. **Patients have a right to Pain Control.** The seminar explored some new thinking in the area of pain and its assessment and management, challenges in education about pain, the setting of standards and other issues and challenges.

**Maria Rossiter-Thornton**, RN, Therapeutic Touch Practitioner & Volunteer, Casey House Hospice explained the Spiritual Aspects of Therapeutic Touch (TT). It is a complementary therapy with many applications in health care. The spiritual effects of this healing modality in patients with chronic and terminal conditions was discussed.

The beneficial effects for the practitioner and caregiver were reviewed. Participants were given the history of TT, the research on which it is based, and were shown some simple experiential exercises to demonstrate how this modality works. Topics discussed: 1) the nature and the use of TT in hospice palliative care; 2) the effectiveness of TT in the promotion of the relaxation response, reduction in anxiety, decrease in the client's perception of pain and the promotion of healing towards wholeness; 3) Heart-Centred mediation used to explore the spiritual aspects of TT.

**Dr. Stanley Zheng**, Director, Cancer and palliative Care Services, Yee Hong Centre discussed Complementary and Alternative Medicine. A brief review of common practices from complementary and alternative medicine was presented.

The focus of the presentation was on cancer care. Regarding user/buyer of alternative medicines: be aware, be educated; become familiar with the common indications and contraindications of alternative therapy; become aware of potential adverse effects of certain natural products

**Dr. Sat Dharam Kaur**, Naturopathic Doctor, Certified Kundalini Yoga Teacher, took us through some exercises from the Kundalini yoga tradition to improve the flexibility of the spine, generate healing energy in the hands, strengthen one's electromagnetic field and protect it from negativity. These exercises were aimed at Caregivers who must take care of their own well being in order to be effective caregivers.

— Donna Baker

The networking with other Hospice volunteers and personnel was rewarding for me. It affirms for me the important work that we participate in as we go about providing hospice support in our own communities. With this group of conference participants, it was safe and permissible to ask questions or to offer opinions, and receive helpful information and acknowledgment for the commitment of hospice volunteering.

I attended the celebration of life and love memorial service put on by Hospice of Waterloo Region. Rosemarie Baker, the manager of programs and services, led us through a ritual of expressing grief for a deceased loved one through lighting of a candle of hope.

With the use of a patchwork quilt and a video called "Moon Quilt", we were gently encouraged to reflect back to a significant loss we have had. Then we were invited to take one patch from several and to write some meaningful words about our deceased loved one. We then pinned it to the quilt in memory of that person. Rosemarie told us that all the patches would be pieced together and quilted to create a memorial quilt. "Life is like a patchwork, made of square snippets of time, bound together by the stitches of memory."

For me, this was very comforting and a healing experience; I had recently been bereaved as my husband's brother had died very suddenly at the end of August.

— Sheila McLaughlin

## NEWS FLASH: CONGRATULATIONS

In November, Tom Whitcroft (our coordinating committee chair) and his wife, Mary-Lou, ordered and paid for a new 2004 Ford Escape. Upon its arrival at the end of the month, they found, much to their surprise and delight, that they had won their car in Ford's National Give-away Celebration - one of sixty-six give aways. Tom was very happy to see his check ripped up! While it has become Mary-Lou's car, Tom says he gets to drive it occasionally. **Enjoy!**

## FUNERAL MEMORIES

At a recent funeral, the pastor brought to the attention of family descendants of the deceased, the fact that they were indeed not really losing their grandparent. To remember their loved one, they needed only to look into a mirror and realize that grandma or grandpa are living within them through genetics and family memories.

— Kathy Peacock

## DEAR HOSPICE FRIENDS:

Thank you to all of you for your support, you cards, your sympathy and your presence at my Dad's Memorial Service.

Your friendship means a great deal to us.

*Sincerely,  
Bert and Mary Kowaltschuk*

## INVITATION FOR SUBMISSIONS

This is your newsletter. Be part of it by contributing a story, a poem, or a news item. Mail our editor, Donna Baker, 95 Moore Street, R R 3, Lion's Head, NOH 1W0. You can also email Donna at [dbaker@amtelecom.net](mailto:dbaker@amtelecom.net)



## WORKSHOP REPORT

A Spirituality Workshop sponsored by the Pastoral Care Dept., Grey Bruce Health Services at Warton Hospital on October 28, 2003 was presented by Angela Schmidt and Fr. Ed Waggner.

In the morning session with Angela Schmidt we reviewed the potential each person has, to bring assistance to another person through their giftedness. We were invited to consider those individuals who have "gifted" us with their time, kindness, tolerance, love and acceptance.

We were asked to role play by wearing the shoes of another person who has suddenly been given a diagnosis of a terminal illness.

How would we want people to help us?

We discussed topics of a healing conversation. For example: Rather than "How are you?" be more specific and ask, "How are you feeling this afternoon?" or "How did the surgery go?" or "What may I do for you?"

The afternoon session with Fr Ed Waggner was interactive. He suggested that we write down what we would respond to someone who asked questions such as "Why me?" or "What do I do now?" or "What will happen to me?"

**Scenario:** As a Pastoral Care Volunteer, you are called to visit a woman in hospital, who has her fifty year old husband (an accountant, sitting in a chair opposite her) and their only son (first year university student leaning against the far wall) visiting with her in her room.

**Ask yourself:** What would you wear? How would you approach those present? What would be your approach and how would you comfort them? We were to formulate a prayer to say during the visit.

**Suggestions:** Introduce yourself; Acknowledge all who are in the room; Attempt to make all comfortable with your presence; Sit beside the patient so you are at eye level and can look at them; Do not overstay the visit.

As we each prepared the prayer to be said at the bedside it was interesting that most people were comfortable doing this! Some were more inclusive and commented on the approach to the patient and family (apparel and process) and as it happened most of those were hospice volunteers.

**Other suggestions:** Offer comfort; Show that you care; Do not show agreement or disagreement with patient or family choices; Support their decisions; Be in touch with your own feelings — but do not let them influence the conversation; Be there for the "long haul;" People need time to adjust and will often ask "What if?;" Often all that is needed by the patient and family is a "sounding board" — over and over again.

**Also:** Healing conversation does not have to be conducted out loud — sometimes writing their thoughts may help; Be a helpful resource — we do not always have the answers — be truthful and offer to make a referral.

Take initiative. Sometimes, patient and family do not have a realistic view, when asked "What may I do for you?"

It is sometimes the thing(s) they do **not** ask for that may mean the most to them. Put yourself in their shoes. Tune into unspoken words such as body language. Be a friend **not** a hero. Be compassionate.

**The essence of a "healing conversation" is understanding and being understood.**

— Marge Farrell